DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 172 818 IR 007 456

AUTHOR Caffarella, Rosemary S.
TITLE Needs Assessment. Diffusion of Innovations Handbook Series.
INSTITUTION Maine Univ., Orono. Coll. of Education.
PUB DATE 78
NOTE 34p.; For related documents, see IR 007 455-457

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Conferences; *Education; *Evaluation; *Evaluation Methods; Group Dynamics; Hearings; *Needs Assessment; Observation; Questionnaires; Testing

ABSTRACT

This handbook reviews several methods for conducting a needs assessment, including surveys, observation, testing, public hearings, spatial analysis, and conferences. A detailed section on the development of questionnaires is provided, and the appendices include samples of questionnaire information handouts, a nominal group process technique, written materials useful in needs assessment, a needs assessment summary, and several bibliographies. (Author/CMV)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED172818

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

N E E D S A S S E S S M E N T

Rosemary S. Caffarella, Ph.D.
University of Maine at Orono

DIFFUSION OF INNOVATIONS
HANDBOOK SERIES

Edward P. Caffarella, Ph.D.
Editor

Published by the
College of Education
University of Maine at Orono
© 1978

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Edward P. Caffarella

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

IR007452

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This handbook is part of a series of handbooks on the diffusion of innovations within educational settings. The titles in the series are Needs Assessment, Information Retrieval, and Packaging for Dissemination.

The preparation of the handbooks was supported in part by the Vocational Education Act, 1968, with a Research Contract Part C, from the Bureau of Vocational Education and by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1974, Part IV-C, through the State Department of Educational and Cultural Services (SDECS), Augusta, Maine. The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the SDECS and no official endorsement by the U.S. Office of Education should be inferred.

The photograph on the cover of this handbook is from the photograph collection of the Kennebunkport Historical Society.

Many individuals assisted in the execution of this project. Particular thanks go to John Moran of the Bureau of Vocational Education for his encouragement and advice throughout the project. Many other individuals notably Lois Jones and Richard Riley within the Department of Educational and Cultural Services also assisted in the execution of the project.

The project staff included Rosemary Caffarella, Associate Principal Investigator, Andrew Abbott, Nancy Andrews, Sam Garwood, James Hart, Anne Pooler, Rosemary Salesi and Edward Caffarella, Principal Investigator. Special thanks to Phyllis Thibodeau for the typing of the handbooks.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Acknowledgments	iii
Needs Assessment Defined	1
Needs Assessment Process	2
Methods for Conducting Needs Assessment	3
Summary	6
Bibliography	7

APPENDICES

A	QUESTIONNAIRE INFORMATION HANDOUTS	8
B	NOMINAL GROUP PROCESS TECHNIQUE	21
C	WRITTEN MATERIALS USEFUL IN NEEDS ASSESSMENT	25
D	NEEDS ASSESSMENT SUMMARY	26
E	RESOURCE MATERIAL - NEEDS ASSESSMENT	29

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Needs Assessment Defined

Prior to the introduction of a new program, school systems should determine whether there is a need in the community for that program. A need is defined as a discrepancy or gap between a present state and an ideal state. (Edling & Twelker, 1976; Beatty, 1976). It is "a normative concept shaped by the social environment and involving values and judgments." (Managing Human Services, 1977, p. 33).

There are two basic types of community needs, prescriptive needs and motivational needs. A prescriptive need "is viewed as a condition of deficiency relative to a socially accepted standard, norm or end state." (Beatty, 1976, p. 6). A need in a motivational sense "is a deficiency relative to a specific individually defined desired goal or end state." (Beatty, 1976, p. 7).

The process for identifying community needs is termed a needs assessment. A needs assessment is a systematic way of identifying community deficiencies or problems. Unlike traditional program planning, it focuses not on solutions for a specific problem or a way to solve a problem, but on the identification of the major problem areas of that community.

Needs Assessment Process

There are nine steps in the process of conducting a needs assessment. They are as follows:

1. Conscious decision to complete a needs assessment with a commitment to planning;
2. Identification of individuals to be involved (learners, educators, community);
3. Determination of a specific focus, budget, and time frame;
4. Selection of data collection methods;
5. Collection of data;
6. Analysis of data to determine points of agreement and disagreement;
7. Rank ordering the needs from most critical to least critical in terms of ideal state (not necessarily the most feasible at this point);
8. From rank order, selection of those needs for immediate attention (one must apply here a test of feasibility);
9. Development of specific objectives, plan of action, and evaluation procedures for the selected problems.

The carrying through of this process calls for a partnership among the learners, school personnel, and the community (Edling & Twelker, 1976, p. 57).

Methods for Conducting Needs Assessment

There are a variety of methods that can be used to conduct a needs assessment. They range from highly structured techniques (e.g., mail surveys) to very informal methods (e.g., attending social gatherings). Some of these methods are as follows:

A. Surveys
   1. mail
   2. telephone
   3. interview
   4. group

B. Expert judgment

C. Observation
   1. open ended
   2. structured with specific areas to investigate

D. Testing
   1. attitude
   2. standard achievement
   3. aptitude
   4. interest

E. Public hearings

F. General Group Meetings
   1. town meeting
   2. neighborhood groups
   3. interest groups

G. Statistical materials (e.g., census material)

H. Spatial analysis

I. Conferences and workshops

J. Review of Written Materials

1. newspaper
2. local magazine
3. national magazine
4. guides
5. directories
6. histories
7. records
8. annual reports
9. yearbooks
10. organizational files
11. journal articles
12. books
13. results of other needs surveys

K. Informal - Whatever you can think of

1. attending various community meetings
2. meeting with people on their "turf" (e.g., in homes, on street corners, in the bowling alley)
3. attend social gathering
4. do a lot of listening

These methods may be used alone or in combination depending upon the objectives, the people involved, and funding available for the needs assessment. Three of the most widely used methods in needs assessment include surveys, group meetings, and a review of written materials.

Key to the use of the survey method is the development and administration of the survey questionnaire. Included in Appendix A is reference material on survey questionnaires. This material describes procedures for questionnaire development, types of questions that can be used in questionnaires, a guide for question formulation, the mail questionnaire survey, and a bibliography on questionnaire development.

In using the group method for assessing community needs, one must be able to structure the group to ensure that the necessary data is generated during the group sessions. One method for doing this is the nominal group process. There are four basic steps to this process.

1. Silent Generation of Ideas. Participants are asked to respond to the problem presented on an individual basis. Without discussion each participant should write down his thoughts on the topic presented.

2. Round-Robin Listing. Each participant in turn presents one of his ideas which is listed verbatim on a blackboard or newsprint, until all ideas have been listed. This process should also be done without discussion.

3. Discussion. Discussion is led on the recorded ideas for the purpose of clarification, elaboration and evaluation. The items should be discussed in order with none being eliminated.

4. Ranking. Each participant is asked to choose the ten most important items from the list and rank them in

priority. A group decision is made based on individual priority listings. (Ford, Daird, & Remiroff, 1975, p. 180). A more detailed outline of the nominal group process is given in Appendix B.

A review of present written materials is an important tool for gathering data for a needs assessment. From these materials a great deal can be learned about the community in general, the people, and the major problem areas. Appendix C outlines some of the most useful materials that can be obtained from most community, institution, or college libraries.

Summary

A summary of a needs assessment study might be outlined as shown below (Edling & Twelker, 1976).

WHAT IS (Present state)	WHAT SHOULD BE (Desired state)
Learners	Learners
Educators	Educators
Community	Community

This summary should be used as the basis for effective program planning and development within educational organizations.

A summary outline of the needs assessment process and a bibliography on needs assessment are included in Appendices D and E. The summary is useful for relating both the concept and process of needs assessment to various community groups.

Bibliography

Beatty, Paulette. "A Process Model for the Development of an Information Base for Community Needs Assessment: A Guide for Practitioners." Paper Presented at the 17th Annual Meeting of the Adult Education Research Conference. April 7-9, 1976, Toronto.

Edling, Jack & Twelker, Paul. Identification of Problem - Needs Assessment Workshop: Participant's Manual. University of Consortium for Instructional Development and Technology, University of Southern California, 1976.

Ford, David L., Jr. & Memiorff, Paul M. "Applied Group Problem-Solving: The Nominal Group Technique." In the 1975 Annual Handbook for Group Facilitators, pp. 179-182. Edited by John E. Jones and J. William Pfeiffer. La Jolla, California: University Associates, 1975.

Knowles, Malcolm. The Modern Practice of Adult Education. New York: Association Press, 1970.

Managing Human Services. Washington, D.C.: International City Management Association, 1977.

Appendix A

QUESTIONNAIRE INFORMATION HANDOUTS

Prepared By:

Rosemary Caffarella, Ph.D.
University of Maine at Orono
Orono, Maine
1977

HANDOUT I--PROCEDURE FOR QUESTIONNAIRE DEVELOPMENT

I. Define the Problem

   a. What kind of information is sought
   b. Needs to be outlined as specific objectives

2. Define What the Main Method of Data Collection Will Be

   a. Mail questionnaire
   b. Administered written questionnaire to individual or groups
   c. Interview--individual or group

3. Define the Method of Approach to Respondents

   a. Type of sponsorship
   b. Will respondent answer anonymously
   c. Will respondents' answers be confidential

4. What Type of Questions Will be Used

   a. Open versus closed questions or a combination
   b. Fact versus opinion or combination
   c. The type of questions depends on:
      1. Mode of Administration
      2. Subject Matter
      3. Characteristics of sample population--What will they know? What will they answer?

5. First Draft of Questionnaire

   a. Outline topics
   b. Decide the best sequence
   c. Write the questions--include questions to test the reliability of questionnaire
   d. Develop format for questionnaire (e.g., how to mark responses, spacing and appearance of questions if written)
   e. Develop the directions for the use of the questionnaire

6. Pilot Test the Questionnaire

   a. Test for face and content validity
   b. Test for reliability
   c. Review the format for the questionnaire
   d. Check to see if there are any administration problems (e.g., length of questionnaire, respondents not understanding direction)
   e. Check the analysis procedures
   f. Make the necessary changes in the questions, format, administration, and analysis procedures*

*Note: If substantial changes are made, the instrument will need a second pilot test.

Page two - Handout I

7. Final Editing

   a. Make one final inspection on content, form, sequence of questions, spacing, arrangements, appearance of materials, and direction.

HANDOUT II--TYPES OF QUESTIONS THAT CAN BE USED IN QUESTIONNAIRES

I. Open Ended Questions

A. Definition--Questions only raise issues, do not provide or suggest a structure for the respondents' reply.

B.

Advantages	Disadvantages
1. Gives more freedom for respondent to answer	1. Difficult to code information
2. Respondent can answer in own language	2. Analysis of responses is difficult and expensive
3. Able to get at more details and information	3. May be difficult for respondent to answer
4. Able to get at issues that are uppermost in respondents' mind in relationship to the questions asked	4. If written, person must be able to write
5. In interview situation interviewer can probe for more information and give more encouragement	5. Judgment may be left to interviewer in interview situation as to what is taken down and how it is coded

C. Best Used

1. When issue is complex
2. When relevant dimensions are not known
3. Used more in initial exploration or formulation of an issue

D. Form of Question

1. Extended essay response--no boundaries placed on number of points will discuss or type of organization to use
2. Restrictive essay response--more limited in form and scope as told specifically the context the answer should take
3. Short Answer--respondent gives a short answer to a specific given question

II. Closed (pre-coded) Questions

A. Definition--Respondent is limited to stated alternative answers

Page two - Handout II

B. Advantages

1. Provides uniformity	1. May put respondents' answer into a category one may not normally choose
2. Range of answers is limited and well established beforehand	2. May have an item to which respondent has no answers
3. Answers to items are (or should be) exhaustive and mutually exclusiv	3. Bias may set in from omission of other possible responses
4. Helps to ensure answers given in a frame of reference wanted	4. Lose spontaneity
5. Helps to make clear the dimensions of a response	
6. Fairly simple to administer	
7. Do not need to have writing skills	

C. Best Used

1. When possible alternative replies are known and can be given in a clear-cut way
2. Appropriate for screening factual information
3. Appropriate for eliciting material on which people have clear and definite opinions

D. Form of Questions

1. Dichotomous--have two alternative responses (e.g., True--False)
2. Multiple Choice--choosing a response from three or more given alternatives
3. Ratings--giving a numerical rating to some kind of judgment
4. Ranking--arranging items in order in regard to some common rank; make sure alternatives are not so close that it is difficult to rank
5. Check Lists--may choose more than one response in a given item; is a type of multiple choice
6. Inventories--list that respondent is asked to check item or mark item in a particular way; designed to yield two or more scores

7. Grids--an elaboration of the inventory--almost a two-way inventory; simple way to collect information without asking a lot of questions
8. Indexes--similar to an inventory except just consists of one area; a number of dichotomous questions are scored together on the assumption that they have something in common

III. May be a Combination of Open Ended and Closed Questions

HANDOUT III--GUIDE FOR QUESTION FORMULATION

All material for this handout is from: Kornhauser, Arthur, and Sheatsley. "Appendix B--Questionnaire Construction and Interview Procedure." in Research in Social Methods by Claire Selltiz, Lawrence S. Wrightsman and Stuart Cook, pp. 541-563.

I. Decisions about question content

A. Is this question necessary? Just how will it be useful?
B. Are several questions needed on the subject matter of this question?
C. Do respondents have the information necessary to answer the question?
D. Does the question need to be more concrete, specific and closely related to respondents' personal experience?
E. Is the question content sufficiently free from spurious concreteness and specificity?
F. Do the replies express general attitudes and only seem to be as specific as they sound?
G. Is the question content biased or loaded in one direction without accompanying questions to balance the emphasis?
H. Will the respondents give the information that is asked for?

II. Decisions About Question Wording

A. Can the question be misunderstood? Does it contain difficult or unclear phraseology?
B. Does the question adequately express the alternatives with respect to the point?
C. Is the question misleading because of unstated assumptions or unseen implications?
D. Is the wording biased? Is it emotionally loaded or slanted toward a particular kind of answer?
E. Is the question wording likely to be objectionable to the respondent in any way?
F. Would a more personalized or less personalized wording of the question produce better results?
G. Can the question be better asked in a more direct or indirect form?

III. Decisions About Form of Response to Question

A. Can question best be answered in a form calling for check answer, free answer or check answer with follow-up free answer?
B. If check answer--which is best type for this question--dichotomous, multiple choice, or scale?

Page two - Handout II

C. If check list is used, does it cover adequately all the significant alternatives without overlapping and in a defensible order? It is of reasonable length? Is the wording of items impartial and balanced?
D. Is form of response easy, definite, uniform, and adequate for the purpose?

IV. Decisions About the Place of the Question in Sequence

A. Is the answer to the question likely to be influenced by the content of preceding question?
B. Is the question led up to in a natural way? Is it incorrect psychological order?
C. Does the question come too early or too late from the point of view of arousing interest and receiving sufficient attention, avoiding resistance, etc.?

HANDOUT IV--MAIL QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

I.

Advantages	Disadvantages
A. Fairly inexpensive method	*A. Problem of adequate response rate
B. Is an efficient method	B. Late returns by respondents
C. Does not need much skill to administer	C. Problem with people who can not read
D. All receive the same set of questions posed in the same way	D. Problem with people who can not understand questions and have no one to ask
E. Is impersonal in nature, thus people may respond more	E. All questions can be seen; thus may create bias
F. Respondents may have greater confidence in its anonymity	F. Is no way to probe for answers from respondents
G. Is no interviewer bias	G. Not a good tool for spontaneous responses
	H. Not as appropriate as an interview to get at the emotional aspects of a subject

*Major Disadvantage

II. Steps in Conducting a Mail Questionnaire Survey

A. Define the problem in terms of specific objectives
B. Select the population sample--most important to choose those who can and will supply the information wanted
C. Construct the questionnaire (see Handouts I, II, and III)

1. Questions should be practical and answerable
2. Each item must measure an aspect of the objectives for the study

D. Develop the letter of transmittal

1. Should be brief
2. Neatness and composition important
3. Content
   a. Outline the purpose and importance of study
   b. Make respondent feel important
   c. Give a time limit for the returns
   d. Offer to share the results
   e. Give sponsor
4. Include a return envelope and postage
5. Address letter personally if possible

E. Development of analysis procedures

1. Important to do before sending out questionnaire

2. What kind of process will be used--hand or machine
3. Answers should be pre-coded prior to questionnaire being mailed. If the pre-coding is evident on the questionnaire it should be explained to the respondent

F. Pilot test the materials (See Handout I)

G. Mail the questionnaire

1. Timing is very important (e.g., not before a holiday or prime vacation time)
2. Check on various types of postal rates

H. Monitor the returns

1. How many received each day
2. Check each questionnaire out as received to see if data is complete
3. Begin to code and keypunch

I. Follow-up procedures

1. Alternative methods

A. A reminder post-card
B. A second letter
C. A second letter with a questionnaire enclosed
D. Telephone
E. Certified mail follow-up to make sure the person received
F. A combination of the above

2. Do at two to three week intervals

J. Analyze the data

K. Write up the report

III. Ideas for Getting a Better Resource Rate for Mail Questionnaires

A. Get an official sanction that will carry weight with the respondents
B. Provide a payment or gift for respondent
C. Give a respondent free samples (e.g., pencil, coffee)
D. Enclose self-addressed envelope with stamps for respondent to return questionnaire

Page three - Handout IV

E. Assure that respondents' answers will be anonymous and confidential
F. Have a good cover letter
G. Make the questionnaire short and simple
H. Correlate content of questionnaire with interests of respondent
I. Make the questionnaire attractive

IV. Notes on Mail Questionnaire Format

A. Should be spread out and uncluttered
B. Do not have more than one question on a line
C. Do not abbreviate questions
D. Have clear spaces for item responses--boxes appear to be best form for this
E. If contingency questions are used, this should be made clear in the directions
F. Questions should be kept under 20 words
G. Use a colored paper rather than white

HANDOUT V--BIBLIOGRAPHY ON QUESTIONNAIRES

*Those items starred were used to develop the handouts

Books

*Babbie, Earl. Survey Research Methods. Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1973, Chapters 7 and 8.

*Borg, Walter and Gall, Meredith. Education Research, An Introduction. New York: David McKay and Co., 1971, Chapter 8.

Festinger, Leon and Katz, David, Editors. Research Methods in the Behaviorial Sciences. New York: Brydon Press, 1953.

Glock, Charles Y., Editor. Survey Research in the Social Sciences. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Hyman, Herbert H. Survey Design and Analysis: Principle, Cases and Procedures. Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1955.

Kahn, Robert and Cannell, Charles F. The Dynamics of Interviewing. New York: Wiley and Sons, 1975, Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9.

*Mehrens, William and Lehmann I. Measurement and Evaluation in Education. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1973, Chapters 5, 8, 9, and 10.

*Moser, C.A., and Kalton, G. Survey Methods in Social Investigation. London: Heinemann, 1958, Chapters 10 and 12.

*Oppenheim, A.N. Questionnaire Design and Attitude Measurement. New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1966.

Parten, Mildred. Surveys, Polls and Samples, Practical Procedures. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950, Chapter 6.

Payne, S.L. The Art of Asking Questions. New Jersey: Princeton U. Press, 1951.

*Sax, Gilbert. Empirical Foundations of Educational Research. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1968, Chapter 20.

*Selltiz, Clare, Wrightsman, Lawrence, and Cook, Stuart. Research Methods and Social Relationships. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1976, Chapter 9 and Appendix B.

Warwick, Donald and Lininger, Charles. The Sample Survey: Theory and Practice. New York: McGraw Hill, 1975.

Page two--Handout V

*Wentling, Tim and Lawson, Tom. Evaluating Occupational and Educational Training Programs. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1975, Chapters 4 and 5.

*Young, Pauline. Scientific Social Surveys and Research. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1966, Chapter 8.

Journals

Educational and Psychological Measurement

International Journal of Opinion and Attitude Research

Journal of Educationai Research

Public Opinion Quarterly

Appendix B

NOMINAL GROUP PROCESS TECHNIQUE

The Nominal group technique was developed by Andre L. Dilbecq and Andrew H. Van deVen in 1968. It is basically a group process model for problem identification and problem planning. The technique employs a planning sequence which seeks to provide an orderly process of structuring the decision making at different phases of planning. For more information refer to Group Techniques for Program Planning.

Conducting the Nominal Group Technique (NGT):

Design Tasks:

Prepare the NGT question

- Staff clarifies objectives
- Illustrates desired items in terms of level of abstraction and scope
- Prepares alternative forms of an NGT question
- Pilot-tests to select the question to be used

Print the NGT question on nominal group worksheets for each participant

Select the rating method suitable to the task

Preparing the Meeting Room:

Table Arrangement:

- Tables arranged as an open "U" with a flip chart at the open end of the table
- Sufficient space between tables to avoid interference

Supplies:

Flip chart for each table and for the leader
Roll of masking tape
Nominal worksheets and pencils for each participant
3 x 5 index cards (for ranking): rating forms (for rating)
Felt pens

Introducing the Meeting:

Welcoming Statement:

Cordial and warm welcome
Statement of the importance of the NGT task
Clarification of the importance of each group's members' contributions
Statement of the use or purpose of the meeting output

Conducting the Nominal Group Process

Step 1: Silent Generation of Ideas in Writing

Present the nominal question to the group in writing
Verbally read the question
Illustrate level of abstraction and scope desired with example which does not distort (lead) group responses
Avoid other requests for clarification
Charge the group to write ideas in brief phrases of statements
Ask group members to work silently and independently
Model good group behavior
Sanction description of the silent, independent activity by comments addressed to group as a whole

Benefits: Provides adequate time for thinking
Facilitates hard work by the model of other group members reflecting and writing
Avoids interrupting each other's thinking
Avoids premature focusing on single ideas
Eliminates dominance by high-status or aggressive members in idea generation
Keeps the group problem-centered

Step 2: Round-Robin Recording of Ideas on a Flip Pad

Process. Provide clear instructions concerning the step:

Indicate objective of the step is to map the the group's thinking
Explain need to present ideas in brief words or phrases
Explain process of taking one idea serially from each member
Explain group members must decide if items are duplicates
Explain that an individual may "pass" when he has no further items, but may "re-enter" later
Express the desirability of adding new ideas even though they are not on individual worksheets
Explain inappropriateness of discussion prior to completion of listing

Quick, effective mechanical recording:
Record ideas as rapidly as possible
Record ideas in the words used by group members
Provide assistance in abbreviating only in special situations
Make the entire list visible by tearing off completed sheets and taping them on an area visible to all group members
Sanction group as a whole if individuals engage in side conversations or attempt to discuss items prior to completing the listing

Benefits:
Equalized opportunity to present ideas
Assists in separating ideas from personalities
Provides a written record and guide
Places conflicting ideas comfortable in front on the group
Forces the group to fully explore the problem

Step 3: Serial Discussion for Clarification

Process:
Verbally define the purpose of the step:
To clarify the meaning of the items
To explain reasons for agreement or disagreement
Indicate the final judgments will be expressed by rating so arguments are unnecessary
Pace the group so that all ideas receive sufficient time for clarification
Avoid facing the member who originally lists the idea to be solely responsible for clarifying the item

Benefits:
Avoids having discussion focus unduly on any particular idea or subset of ideas
Helps eliminate misunderstanding
Provides opportunity to express the logic behind items
Allows members to disagree with argumentation

Step 4: Preliminary Vote on Item Importance

Process: Ask the group to select from the entire list a specific number (7 plus or minus 2) of priority items:

Place each priority item on a separate 3 x 5 card or rating form
Rank-order or rate the selected priority items
Collect the cards or rating forms and shuffle them to retain anonymity
Tally the rate and record the results on the flip chart in front of the group

Benefits: Obtaining independent judgments in writing helps eliminate social pressures
Expressing judgments mathematically by rank-ordering or rating increases accuracy of judgments
Displaying the array of individual rates clearly highlights areas needing further clarification or discussion

Step 5: Discussion of the Preliminary Vote

Process: Define the role of the step as clarification, not pressure for consensus
Keep the discussion brief
Caution group members to think carefully about any changes they make in their rating

Benefits: Provides group members a final opportunity to clarify their positions
Ensures "spread" votes really reflect differences in judgment, not unequal information or misunderstanding

Step 6: Final Vote

Process: (Repeat Step 4)

Benefits: Accurate aggregation of group judgments and error reduction
Closure to the meeting.

Developed by Sharon Sprague
Graduate Student
Community Development
University of Maine at Orono
Orono, Maine
1978

Appendix C

WRITTEN MATERIALS USEFUL IN NEEDS ASSESSMENT

1. Local, state, and national newspapers:

   e.g., Bangor Daily News, Kennebec Journal, Portland Press, NY Times, Maine Times

2. Local and state magazines:

   e.g., Downeast, Yankee

3. National magazines and journals:

   e.g., Times, Newsweek

4. Specific academic and trade journals related to the needs assessment area

5. U.S. Census Data Reports

6. Annual reports and other written materials from: a) City/town government including specific boards and committees (e.g., school, recreation); b) Private community agencies (e.g., United Way, YWCA); c) State and federal agencies (e.g., HEW); d) Private business and industry

7. Histories written about the area (check with local historical society)

8. Review of other needs survey done either in the same area or about the same topic

9. Books appropriate to the area of needs assessment (e.g., school funding, health care)

10. Directories and Guides of the local area

Appendix D

NEEDS ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

I. Need

A. is a discrepancy (gap) between a present state and an ideal state

B. is a normative concept, shaped by social and environmental factors involving values and judgments

C. needs change over time

II. Types of Needs

A. Prescriptive - a condition of deficiency relative to a socially accepted standard, norm or end state

B. Motivational - a deficiency relative to an individually defined desired goal or end state

III. Needs Assessment

A. is a formal process for identifying problems (gaps) to be solved

B. focuses on the end product and not on the means to get there

C. focuses on problems and not solutions

IV. The carrying through of a needs assessment calls for a partnership in education among learners, educators, and the community

V. Process for Conducting a Needs Assessment

A. Conscious decision to complete a needs assessment with a commitment to planning

B. Identify who will be involved (learners, educators, community)

C. Determine a specific focus, budget and time frame

D. Select data collection methods and means

E. Let someone else do the publicity

F. Collect the data

G. Analyze data to determine points of agreement and disagreement; reconcile points of disagreement

H. Rank order the needs in terms of ideal state (not feasible at this point)

I. From rank order, select those needs which you will work on

J. Once determined develop specific objectives, a plan of action, evaluation procedures for problems to be solved

VI. Methods for Assessing Needs

A. Surveys
   1. mail
   2. telephone
   3. interview
   4. group

B. Expert judgment

C. Observation
   1. open ended
   2. structured with specific areas to evaluation

D. Testing
   1. attitude
   2. standard achievement
   3. aptitude
   4. interest

E. Public hearings

F. General Group Meetings
   1. town meeting
   2. neighborhood groups
   3. interest groups

G. Statistical materials (e.g., census material)

H. Spatial analysis

I. Conferences and workshops

J. Review of Written Materials
   1. newspaper
   2. local magazine
   3. national magazine
   4. guides
   5. directories
   6. histories
   7. records

8. annual reports
9. yearbooks
10. organizational files
11. journal articles
12. books
13. results of other similar needs surveys

K. Informal - Whatever you can think of
1. attending various community meetings
2. meeting with people on their "turf" (i.e., in homes, on street corners, in the bowling alley)
3. attend social gathering
4. do a lot of listening

VII. A Needs Assessment Summary might look something like this

What Is (Present state)	What should be (Desired state)
Learners	Learners
Educators	Educators
Community	Community

Resources

Beatty, Paulette. "A Process Model for the Development of An Information Base for Community Needs Assessment: A Guide for Practitioners." Paper Presented at the 17th Annual Meeting of the Adult Education Research Conference. April 7-9, 1976, Toronto.

Edling, Jack & Twelker, Paul. Identification of Problem Needs Assessment Workshop, Participant's Manual. University Consortium for Instructional Development and Technology, University of Southern California, 1976.

Knowles, Malcolm. The Modern Practice of Adult Education. New York: Assoc. Press, 1970, Chapter 5, pp. 79-120.

Managing Human Services. Washington, D.C.: International City Management Association, 1977, Chapter 5, pp. 128-154.

Appendix E

RESOURCE MATERIAL - NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Beatty, Paulette. "A Process Model for the Development of An Information Base for Community Needs Assessment: A Guide for Practitioners." Paper Presented at the 17th Annual Meeting of the Adult Education Research Conference. April 7-9, 1976, Toronto.

Bebbie, Earl. Survey Research Methods. Belmont, Calif.: Wadunth Publishing Co., 1973.

Bell, Roger A.; Sundel, Martin; and Aponte, Joseph. Needs Assessment in Health & Human Services. Proceedings of the Louisville National Conference, Louisville, 1976.

Bowers & Associates. A Guide to Needs Assessment in Community Education Programs. Reston, Virginia, Jan. 1976.

Bradshaw, Jonathan. "The Concept of Social Need." New Society, Vol. 30, March 1972, pp. 640-43.

Brooks, George S. "The Task Force Approach of Determining Community Needs." Adult Leadership, Vol. 21, No. 4, (Oct. 1972).

Delbecq, Andre, et al. Group Techniques for Program Planning: A Guide to Nominal Group and Delphi Process. Glenville, Illinois: Scott, Foresmen & Co., 1975.

Developing Alternative Methodologies for Assessing Social Service Needs and Resources. Washington, D.C.: Booz Allen Publishing Administrative Services. (Order #SHR-0000754 Project SHARE).

Ecklein, Joan Levin & Lauffer, Armand, Editors. Community Organizers & Social Planners. New York: John Wiley & Sons and Council on Social Work Education, 1971.

Hand, Samuel E. An Outline of a Community Survey for Program Planning in Adult Education. Bulletin No. 71 F-2, Tallahassee: State Department of Education, 1968.

Kimmel, Wayne. Needs Assessment: A Critical Perspective. Washington, D.C.: Department of Health, Education & Welfare, Office Program Systems, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, Dec. 1977.

Knowles, Malcolm. The Modern Practice of Adult Education. New York: Assoc. Press, 1970, Chapter 5, pp. 79-120.

League of California Cities. Handbook: Assessing Human Needs. Sacramento, August, 1975.

Long, Huey. Approaches to Community Development. Washington, D.C.: National University Extension Association, 1973.

Managing Human Services. Washington, D.C.: International City Management Association, 1977, Chapter 5, pp. 128-154.

McMahon, Ernest E. Needs - Of People and Their Communities--and the Adult Educator: A Review of the Literature of Need Determination. Washington, D.C., AEA/USA, 1970.

Minzey, Jack and Letarte, Clyde E. Community Education: From Program to Process. Midland, MI: Pendall Publishing Co., 1972.

Needs Assessment-Bibliography. Project SHARE, Rockville, Project Share, August, 1976 (Order #SHR-0200201 $4.00).

Rosenfield, Alan S. "Need Surveys and the Social Construction of Reality." Urban & Social Change Review, Vol. 7, No. 2, Summer 1974, p. 39.

Selltiz, Clare; Wrightson, Lawrence; and Cook, Stuart. Research Methods and Social Relationships. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1976.

Sweigert, R. L., Jr. "Assessing Educational Needs to Achieve Relevancy." Education, Vol. XCI, No. 4 (April, May, 1971).

UCLA Needs Assessment Kit. Boston, Mass.: Allyn & Bacon, Inc.

Warren, Roland. Studying Your Community. New York: The Free Press, 1965.

Witkin, B. R. An Analysis of Needs Assessment Techniques for Educational Planning at State, Intermediate and District Levels. Hayward: Celamede County School Dept., May, 1975. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 108 370)

Zangwill, Bruce. A Compendium of Laws and Regulations Requiring Needs Assessment. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health Education and Welfare, May 1977. HEW Pub. #05-77-006.